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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS IN IOWA.

BY- HARTMAN, JOHN J. BASHOR, DOROTHY N.
IOWA STATE UNIV. OF SCIENCE AND TECH., AMES

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THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS RESEARCH PROJECT WAS TO DETERMINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES OF DEMOGRAPHY, ECONOMY, ELECTION HISTORY, AND COMMUNICATION, IN ADDITION TO THE PERCENTAGE OF AFFIRMATIVE VOTES IN SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS. DATA WERE COLLECTED FROM 195 IOWA SCHOOL DISTRICTS INVOLVED IN SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD AND ANALYZED THROUGH THE USE OF A TIME SEQUENCE, SOCIAL ACTION MODEL. MAJOR FINDINGS INDICATE LITTLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL BOND ELECTION OUTCOME AND THE TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES (THE VARIABLES USED IN THIS STUDY) PRESENTED BY EDUCATORS AND REPORTERS AS ESSENTIAL IN SECURING SCHOOL BOND PASSAGE. IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT THE TYPE OF COMMUNITY DECISION MAKING IN SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS IS COMPLEX ENOUGH TO REQUIRE MORE PRECISE SOCIOLOGICAL, SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND COMMUNICATION THEORY THAN WAS UTILIZED IN THIS STUDY. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE RURAL SOCIOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING, (SAN FRANCISCO, AUGUST 26-28, 1967). (ES)

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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS IN IOWA

John J. Hartman

Dorothy N. Bashor

Work reported on herein was completed within the Rural Sociological Research Unit, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, under the direction of George M. Beal, Joe M. Bohlen and Gerald E. Klonglan with Richard Warren as statistical and methodology collaborator. The work was funded under Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare Project No. 431-13-40

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An Analysis of Factors Associated With School Bond Elections in Iowa

John J. Hartman
Dorothy N. Bashor *

ABSTRACT

Obtaining local money to support the ever-expanding educational facilities of school districts is an ongoing task. It is also a form of community decision-making resolved by a discrete yes-no vote by a portion of the registered voters in the district. Several communities (195) have served as the basis for examining factors associated with strategies in trying to pass school bond elections. A literature survey relating to school bond issues and techniques for passing elections would confuse an action worker planning a campaign strategy. There is lack of agreement on which techniques should be employed and how they should be employed. Further, a case can be built for either the use or nonuse of most techniques.

A simplified time sequence model has been developed as an analytical construct to serve as an orderly method of analyzing this social process. The model emphasizes steps which must be considered by strategists in implementing social action programs.

This study examines the results of 195 districts involved in school bond elections over the five year period, January 1, 1960, to December 31, 1964. The demographic, economic, election history, and communication characteristics of these districts have been correlated with the percentage affirmative vote in each district. Results indicate a relatively complex social process is operative that varies widely from district to district.

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*Assistant Professor and Graduate Assistant, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. 1966.

AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS IN IOWA

Introduction

One kind of social change can be considered purposive or instigated social change. This article reports on attempts of school boards to instigate changes in their educational facilities by financing through school bond elections. This kind of community decision-making is differentiated from another kind usually made by elected officials. Many decisions that have consequences for the community are made by elected officials such as the mayor, school boards, mayor/council or city manager. However, the decisions discussed here require district electorate involvement to change the school system and facilities. Some studies have shown that school bond elections are not a salient concern to relatively many registered voters in a given district.

Frame of Reference

The accepted method for a school district to obtain funds for large capital outlays is to issue a school bond proposal to be voted by the district electorate. This method is called inefficient and obsolete by some.[2] However, because of legal requirements this method must be used in most school districts.

Despite the recognized fact that many public school facilities are chronically inadequate, those interested in improvement often face a struggle in making the electorate sufficiently feel the need for additional facilities and in getting them to pass a bond proposal. However, the literature survey indicates that educators and the district electorate hold a generalized feeling that education is "good" and the "democratic process" (election) is the best way to resolve these issues. Usually, issues are resolved on specifics and any opposition takes the form of opposition to selected site, increase in taxes, dissatisfaction with proposed plans, etc. Usually, no organized opposition is formed against the generalized need for educational facilities, although exceptions can be found.

The struggle to obtain funds is evident in the vast amount of descriptive literature available on the subject. Most discussions are found in professional education journals and magazines with teacher and school administrator audiences. Many articles consist of lists, often conflicting, of recommended techniques to be employed in school bond elections. The general theme in many of these articles is to use communication techniques to inform and involve as many people as possible and to stimulate a large turnout at election time. However, there is no agreement on which or how many communication techniques should be used. Some educators state that a well-informed electorate will recognize their duty and pass the bond issue. Others are equally sure that the less knowledge the electorate has and the higher the level of generalization of information about the issue, the more likely the issue will pass.

The desire of school administrators to increase voter turnout seems to conflict with much evidence indicating that voter turnout is negatively correlated with percentage favorable vote.[3] Stone, however, feels that an extensive publicity campaign can offset the negative influence of high voter turnout.[4] At a generalized level, school administrators and board members feel that involving as many individuals in as many ways as possible will result in issue passage. This feeling is often expressed by educators as "talking it up" by members of the community.

Both the education journals and educational administration texts stress involving as many people in the community as possible, generally through the use of "citizens' advisory committees."[5] The recommended composition of this committee may vary from one which is representative of the community[6] (representative carries a variety of interpretations), to one composed of several of the most "talented" community members.[7]

Educators generally stress the ideal of democracy and democratic procedures. Some writers state that any influence exerted by an informal power structure is suspected of being for selfish interests, and therefore is denounced.[8] Kimbrough presents another viewpoint and urges educators to make themselves aware of their informal community power structure(s) and to use it to legitimize school bond elections.[9] Many studies, however, indicate educators do not recognize district education power structures.

It seems that educators who do recognize the power structure do not manipulate it, are unable to interact at this social power level or tend to avoid involvement with these community influentials.

A few studies backed by empirical research have been completed. These researchers have examined the relationship of variables such as school size, school district population, bond issue amount, and assessed valuation (total and per pupil) to passage of the bond issue. Few of these variables have been significantly related to passage of the bond issue.[10] One researcher, Smith, studied the characteristics of the voters, rather than those of the school district, in the Los Angeles City School District.[11] His findings indicate demographic characteristics should play a part in selecting both the media and content of the messages. He suggests census tracts containing mainly young working class families with school-age children should be "courted" with public relations campaigns and favorable newspaper publicity. Smith supports giving specific information to the voters, whereas others have suggested that general descriptive information will produce most favorable results.

In summary, the available literature is confusing on techniques and strategy for successful passage of a school bond issue. Few consistent relationships have been found between independent variables and the dependent variable bond issue election results. Many of the studies mentioned previously consist of impressionistic descriptive accounts of techniques that proved successful in a specific campaign. However, many of these authors are quite willing to generalize to other districts and other elections by presenting lists of techniques to be employed by other school administrators and school boards.

Fully recognizing this state of confusion and the assumed complexity of the bond election process, the authors decided to follow Merton's suggestion, in the preface to Sociology Today, to use a relatively simple research design in an area of theoretical uncertainty.[12] A simplified taxonomic social action model has been developed as a guide for the collection and analysis of the data. This model (shown is Figure 1) consists of classes of variables presented along a temporal dimension that is approximated in a school bond issue election at the school district level.

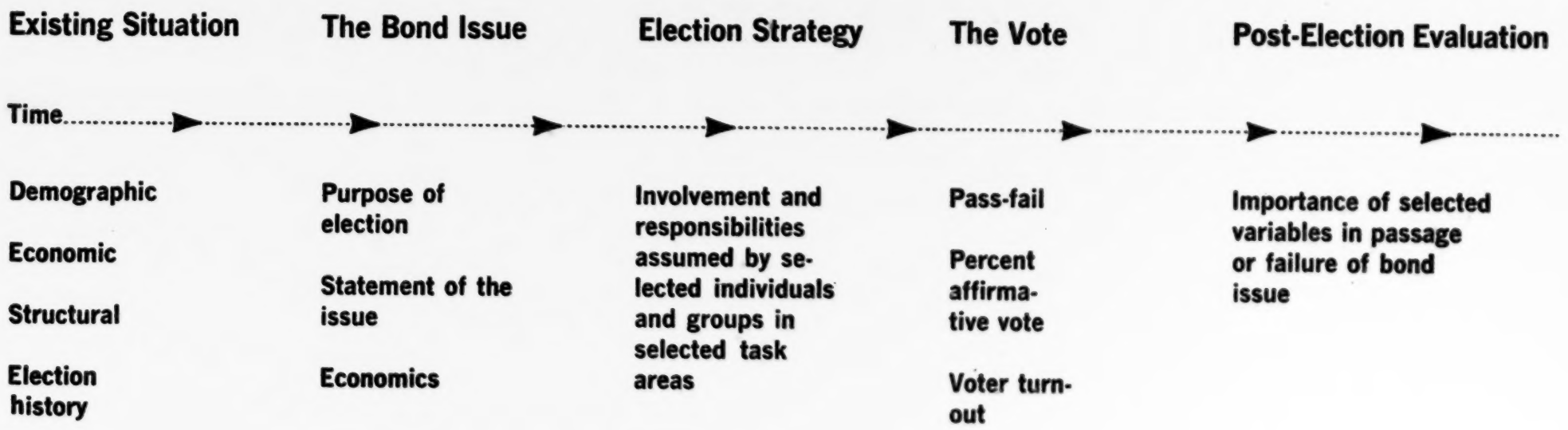

Figure 1. SUMMARY OUTLINE OF SIMPLIFIED TIME SEQUENCE, SOCIAL ACTION MODEL OF SCHOOL BOND ELECTIONS

Objective

The objective of this research project is to determine the relationship between selected variables (derived from the simplified time sequence social action model) and percentage affirmative vote (outcome) in school bond issue elections.

Methods

The names of the school districts in Iowa involved in school bond elections during the five year period from January 1, 1960, to December 31, 1964, were obtained principally from secondary sources. The following agencies provided this information: 1) Research Center for School Administration, State University of Iowa, 2) Iowa State Department of Public Instruction and the 3) Iowa Association of School Boards. This list was not complete and additional steps were taken to insure the inclusion of all districts engaging in school bond elections during this period. Hence, information forms were mailed to all county superintendents and high school principals. From these sources a list was compiled that revealed that 209 districts had held 364 elections on 241 different bond proposals during the five year period.

The population reported on includes all Iowa school districts holding school bond elections during the five year period. Additional restrictions on inclusion in the population were that the district must have maintained a public high school, junior high school, or a community college, and the bond proposal had to be presented for educational facilities or related purposes.

A questionnaire was constructed and mailed to the superintendent of each school district that had held a bond election. A total of 195 of the 209 school superintendents responded for a 93 percent return from districts eligible.

The data reported in this article represent the perceptions of the superintendents following the elections. No attempt has been made to evaluate these perceptions with other observers' perceptions at the same time, nor have the researchers placed any evaluation on whether the perceptions were "right or wrong." They are presented only as perceptions.[13]

Upon receipt of the data, an analysis of selected variables was made. A 38 variable matrix was constructed and has served as a basis for the zero order correlations contained in this article. All correlations reported as significant were significant at the .05 level.

Percentage Affirmative Vote

The ultimate concern of this study centered on variables significantly related to the outcome of the school bond elections. A sixty percent affirmative vote is required for passage of Iowa school bond issues. The concern here is with a dichotomous situation (pass-fail); however, a continuous variable has been used for correlations presented in this report. Percentage affirmative vote correlates +.75 with failure and passage of bond issues.[15] Relationships between variables are stated in terms of the percentage affirmative vote, but the reader should be aware that the point between passing and failing is 59.9 and 60.0 percent affirmative vote.

THE FINDINGS

The findings section of this article presents the relationships between selected variables and percentage affirmative vote. When necessary, the method of measuring the variable is presented. The order of presentation follows the model presented in Figure 1 or along a temporal sequence.

Existing Situational Variables

The existing situational variables are fixed and are not capable of being manipulated, but school board members and school superintendents should probably be aware of these variables in evaluating the present education system and assessing educational needs for the future. An understanding of these variables should also provide insights for possible alternative campaign strategies.

Demographic Characteristics

The literature survey indicates that demographic characteristics of the district are, in some cases, associated with voter turnout and election outcome. Again, the evidence in the literature on this point is not

conclusive. Carter presented the following generalizations between district size and outcome:

1) Turnout is low in all size districts in school financial elections $\bar{X}$ = 36 percent for an 11 year period.
2) Data examined presented no evidence of a ground swell of public interest in school bond elections.
3) Turnout is traditionally lower in large districts.
4) Larger issues (amounts) in medium and large districts produce larger turnouts and more difficulty in passage.[16]

The two demographic variables used in this study were district population and school enrollment. The population of the school districts ranged from 950 residents to more than 255 thousand residents. Fifty-one percent of the districts were in the under 4 thousand category. The total school enrollment in K - 12 grades ranged from 183 to more than 43 thousand students. Fifty-three percent of the districts enrolled fewer than 1,000 students in kindergarten through the 12th grade. There was no significant relationship between the population of the district and percentage affirmative vote (r = +.03). There was no significant relationship between school enrollment and percentage of affirmative votes (r = +.02) or percentage eligible voter turnout (r = -.04).

Economic Variables

Three economic characteristics of the districts were analyzed to determine their relationship with percentage affirmative vote. The three economic correlations with percentage affirmative vote are shown in Table 1.

The two significant relationships were the assessed evaluation per student (r = -.17) and the 2½ mill school house levy in effect at the election time (r = +.23). The 2½ mill levy provides funds for current expenditures and maintaining the school physical plant, not for additions or large capital outlays. This finding may indicate progressive norms toward education in the district. Districts that had this levy had a higher percentage affirmative vote. On the other hand, a negative relationship was found between the existing assessed valuation and affirmative vote. As valuation rose percentage affirmative vote decreased.

Table 1. Correlations between existing situation, economic variables and percentage affirmative vote

	Percent affirmative vote
2½ mill school house tax levy in effect	+.23*
Assessed valuation per student	-.17**
Total school millage levy	+.08

n = 195
* Significant at the .01 level
** Significant at the .05 level

District structural variables

The structural variables examined were district organization and the presence of (and percentage attending) parochial schools. There was no significant relationship between district organization and election outcome. Most (87%) of the districts were community districts. The remainder were either consolidated or independent. Only two districts contained community colleges, but all contained both elementary and secondary schools. The presence of a parochial school (and percentage of total students attending parochial schools) in the district was not related to the outcome of the bond elections.[17]

District election history characteristics

This article centers on the most recent election held during the period of study. One hundred ninety-five districts responded in this survey. Of these 154 (79%) successfully passed their last issue and 41 (21%) failed to pass their issue. Generally the statistics reported are for the total N (195). However, in a few instances comparative statements are made about significant differences between the two groups (pass-fail).

The district election history variables examine the number of elections attempted during the 5 year limits of the study. All three variables relating to voting history in the districts were significantly related to favorable vote. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Correlations between election history variables and percentage affirmative vote

	Percentage affirmative vote
Number of elections	-.21*
Number of successful elections	+.59*
Number of unsuccessful elections	-.46*

N = 195
* Significant at the .01 level

Eighty-six percent of the districts reporting only one election during the five year period were successful. Seventy-nine percent of the last elections held in the 195 districts were successful. The more elections held during the five year period, the less likely the last issue was to succeed.

The negative relationship with the number of elections and the number of unsuccessful elections was brought about by the fact that many issues were resolved favorably on the first attempt, but others that failed continued to be presented. Often these issues were presented again within weeks after defeat. One district was involved in nine unsuccessful elections during the five year period of study.

Results presented in Table 3 show that there is a statistically significant difference between the number of election attempts in those districts that were successful and those unsuccessful in their last attempt. The largest percentage category is the elections that were passed on the first attempt.

These findings suggest community norms and pride in accomplishment in passing bond elections in some districts. At the same time, other districts do not pass bond issues. This may be indicative of factors at work other than educational need. Beal, elsewhere, suggests that community decisions are often resolved on side issues, not on the main issue.[18] In these cases, districts that fail to pass issues may not question educational

Table 3. Number of attempted elections by passage, failure, and total elections

Number of attempted elections	Pass		Fail		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	105	68.2	18	43.8	123	63.1
2	28	18.2	7	17.1	35	17.9
3	10	6.5	4	9.8	14	7.2
4	4	2.6	8	19.5	12	6.2
5+	7	4.5	4	9.8	11	5.6
Total	154	100.0	41	100.0	195	100.0

X^2 = 20.141 significant at the .01 level

need but instead may oppose the issue over such things as site selection, building design, facilities proposed, community factionalism, etc.

THE BOND ISSUE

Purpose of election

Funds were sought for a large range of purposes. A generalized classification of proposed fund requests is shown in Table 4. All requests were for more than one specific purpose. One proposal sought funds for seven different projects; however, the number of purposes for which funds were sought was not statistically related to election outcome.

Statement of the issue

Much has been written concerning how the issue should be presented to the public. Some recommend giving the electorate specific details, while others insist that the proposal should be stated in general terms. There was no significant relationship between the terms of statement of the issue and election outcome (X^2 = 1.48).

Table 4. Category of the purpose of the bond issue election by passage, failure, and total elections*

Category of the purpose	N = 154 Pass	N = 41 Fail	N = 195 Total
New facilities	88	26	114
Additions	71	16	87
Sports facilities	39	12	51
Remodeling	19	12	31
Vocational facilities	17	7	24
College facilities	2	0	2

*All bond elections sought funds for more than one purpose, hence column totals add to more than the total number of issues.

Economic changes

These variables consider economic changes that would have resulted if the issue was successful. The range of the dollar value of these school bond issue requests ranged from a low of 10 thousand dollars to almost 7 and a half million dollars ($7,358,000). The median issue was for 495 thousand dollars. Seventy percent of the issues were for 600 thousand dollars or less. Neither the dollar value of the issue ($r = -.06$) nor the resulting millage increase ($r = -.08$) were significantly related to percentage affirmative vote.

Ratios were computed on selected economic variables and standardized scores were derived. Rations were computed for the following:

1. $\frac{\text{amount of issue}}{\text{valuation per student}}$
2. $\frac{\text{amount of issue}}{\text{total school millage levy}}$
3. $\frac{\text{amount of issue}}{\text{total school enrollment}}$
4. $\frac{\text{amount of issue}}{\text{population of the school district}}$

The resulting ratios showed random distribution. No relationship appeared between these ratios and whether the issues passed or failed. Some districts with high total school millage--amount of issue ratios passed and some failed.

Election Strategy

Within each bond issue election, certain decisions must be made and tasks must be performed. The simplified model considers who was involved in each task and to what degree individuals and groups were involved. Only the communications strategy is examined in this article.[19]

Communication characteristics

The literature relating to school bond elections indicates that many educators view their election failures as resulting from "poor communications." The problem of arousing "voter interest" sufficiently to feel the educational need is also mentioned. The communications media and techniques used in these Iowa elections have been divided into four categories for analysis in this report. These categories are mass media, specially prepared mass media, interpersonal communications and peripheral services. They will be examined in that order; then correlations with summated scores will be presented for each category.

The data analyzed in this report only consider whether the techniques and media were used. Hence the data do not permit qualitative statements about the intensity, quality or timing of the use of the communications.

Mass media variables examined were the traditional channels of newspaper, radio and television. Most districts reporting coverage by these media also reported favorable coverage by the media. There seemed to be little organized opposition to these bond issues through these mass media channels. Often coverage for a district consisted of relatively short reports in either the county or metropolitan newspapers. Many districts do not have a newspaper printed within their boundaries. The same lack of media location within the district boundaries applies to radio and television coverage. Most districts did not have a television station within their boundaries; however, 55 percent of the districts obtained

coverage by use of this media. Most radio and television coverage was the reporting of the pending election with little additional comment. However, 35 percent of the superintendents perceived this reporting as supporting the coming election. On the other hand, 88 percent of the districts had a newspaper printed in their district. Almost all, 93 percent, reported favorable newspaper coverage. Only one percent reported unfavorable newspaper publicity, the remaining 6 percent said newspaper coverage was neutral.

Correlations between percentage favorable vote and the use of these mass media were r = +.004 for newspaper and r = +.010 for radio and television. The summated use-nonuse score for all three media was r = +.014. This evidence suggests that use or nonuse of mass media channels was not highly related to percentage affirmative vote. Comparative data prepared for the base report indicate there was no statistically significant difference in mass media use or in whether coverage was favorable between successful and unsuccessful issue districts.

The specially prepared mass media techniques consist of media prepared for mass exposure without interpersonal relations for the most part. The techniques and their correlations with percentage affirmative vote are presented in Table 5. Most of these techniques are used to gain support for the bond issue and to get out the vote. Only one of these correlations, letters to the editor was significantly related to percentage affirmative vote, but in a negative direction. In addition, four of the seven correlations had a negative sign.

In general, the use of these techniques was not associated with election outcome in Iowa. Literature concerning school bond elections indicates the use of these techniques should produce two results, get out the vote, and induce favorable support. Data from an additional analysis by Hartman, Beal and Lagomarcino indicate that neither purpose was being accomplished in these districts.[20]

Interpersonal communications were defined as those techniques that involved some relationship between two or more individuals. The interaction included face to face relationships in most cases; the telephone committee is an exception. Only two of the first eight variables shown in Table 6 were significantly related to issue outcome.

Table 5. Correlations between specially prepared communication methods and percentage affirmative vote

	Percent affirmative vote
Bulletins and brochures	-.04
Poster campaign	-.03
Local merchant support in ads	+.02
Sample ballot and voting information	-.06
Sound truck	+.03
Reminders by mail	+.03
Letters to the editor	-.23*
Number of all specially prepared communication methods	-.07

N = 195
* Significant at the .01 level

Table 6. Correlations between interpersonal communication and percentage affirmative vote

Interpersonal techniques	Percent affirmative vote
Speakers at clubs and organizations	-.01
General talking up of issue by people	+.18**
General public meetings	+.15**
Student presentations in class	+.03
Clergy support in churches	-.05
House to house canvass	-.07
Telephone committees	-.11
Student information in classes	-.01
Number of interpersonal techniques used	-.06
Transportation to polls	-.18**
Baby sitters	-.02

N = 195
** Significant at the .05 level

The generalized "talking up of the issue by the people" is a phrase often used by educators to indicate community involvement and support. This variable measured the superintendent's perception of the general involvement of the district electorate and the interpersonal "boosting" of the issue. These correlations represent the use-nonuse dichotomy of whether the technique was encourage and used. The summated score represents the total number of interpersonal techniques used in the district, not a score of the intensity of use of each technique. Five of the eight variables were negatively related to favorable vote. It was not anticipated that these techniques traditionally presented as methods of assuring election success would correlate negatively with percentage affirmative vote. Particularly unanticipated were the negative correlations with clergy support, door to door canvass and the telephone committees. The telephone committee was significantly related to the percentage of voter turnout, but again the voter turnout was evidently not related to the percentage of affirmative votes.

All interpersonal communications together produced a negative correlation of r = -.06. In general, the use of these efforts by school boards to induce favorable vote evidently has no relationship to percentage of affirmative votes. Obviously the result of not using these techniques in specific cases under varying conditions can not be determined from these data.

The peripheral services include techniques often used to get out the vote in state and national elections. Neither technique was positively related to percentage affirmative vote. (See Table 6) Both correlations represent the dichotomy (use-nonuse) of each of the peripheral services. Providing transportation to the polls was significantly correlated in the negative direction, r = -.18, significant at the .05 level. Providing baby sitters correlated low and negatively with percentage affirmative vote (r = -.02).

Collectively the total number of communications variables used as measures in this study were not significantly related to election outcome. Further, most of the categories were related negatively to percentage affirmative vote. The total number of all communications techniques and

Table 7. Correlations between summated scores and percentage affirmative vote

Summated scores (Total number techniques used)	Percent affirmative vote
Mass media	+.01
Specially prepared mass media	-.08
Interpersonal communication	-.06
Peripheral services	-.13
Grand total all communication and services	-.07

N = 195
Correlations not significant at the .05 level

services correlated with percentage affirmative vote produced a negative correlation r = -.07. The more techniques and services used in a district, the lower the percentage affirmative vote. However, a counter hypothesis can not be conclusively demonstrated; namely, that the use of fewer techniques will produce a higher percentage affirmative vote. One may hypothesize that more techniques are used when it is perceived that the bond issue will be difficult to pass or be closely contested. Data related to the latter point will now be presented.

Closely contested issues

When a general lack of association between the outcome of the election and the variables used in this study was found, the hypothesis that closely contested issues would differ from the remaining elections was advanced. Closely contested issues were defined as those receiving from 50.1 to 69.9 percent favorable vote. This resulted in 89 of the 195 elections being classified as closely contested. The rationale was that if the outcome was predicted to be very much in doubt, different strategies might be used to attempt to secure a favorable vote on the bond issue.

Clearly, this was not evident in the elections classified as contested. The correlations were quite similar to those including all bond issues.

There were no significant differences in the demographic, economic, election history or communications variables. This finding was not consistent with the rationale for examining issues in this vote range. It was assumed that different relationships would be found. They were not.

THE VOTE

This article has been concerned with the ultimate outcome of the school bond elections with the continuous variable, percentage affirmative vote considered as the dependent variable. The pass-fail dichotomy also served as the basis for a comparative analysis of differences between successful-unsuccessful districts on some variables. The third variable voter turnout has been considered and no relationship was found between voter turnout and percentage affirmative vote ($r = -.04$).

Data relating to the number of elections and district success in passing issues were presented in the existing situation section. The deciles showing percentage affirmative vote are presented in Table 8. Approximately half of the elections (46 percent) were within one decile of the 60 percent affirmative vote needed for passage.

POST ELECTION EVALUATION

Analysis such as this article can be considered post election evaluation. The reflections of the superintendents and board members also are post election evaluations. Due to spatial limitations data are not presented here; however, perceived reasons for passage or failure and statements about what, if anything, the superintendents would do differently are presented in the basic data book.

SUMMARY

The major findings of this study indicate there was little relationship between election outcome and the traditional techniques presented by educators and reporters as essential in securing school bond passage.

Table 8. Percent affirmative vote by passage, failure and total elections

Percent affirmative vote	Pass		Fail		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0 - 9.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
10.0 - 19.9	0	0.0	2	4.9	2	1.0
20.0 - 29.9	0	0.0	4	9.8	4	2.1
30.0 - 39.9	0	0.0	4	9.8	4	2.1
40.0 - 49.9	0	0.0	11	26.8	11	5.6
50.0 - 59.9	0	0.0	20	48.7	20	10.2
60.0 - 69.9	70	45.4	0	0.0	70	36.0
70.0 - 79.9	47	30.5	0	0.0	47	24.1
80.0 - 89.9	27	17.6	0	0.0	27	13.8
90.0 - 99.9	10	6.5	0	0.0	10	5.1
Total	154	100.0	41	100.0	195	100.0

More specifically:

1. There was no association between the demographic characteristics of the district and favorable vote.
2. There was little association between the economic variables and favorable vote. The significant variables were the 2½ mill school house tax ($r = +.23$) and assessed valuation ($r = -.17$).
3. Election history associations indicate that norms of passage or rejection evidently exist in some districts. Passage was not related to amount of the issue, tax base or rate of tax increase. Some districts had passed 5 different issues during the five year period. Others had defeated issues as many as 9 times during the same period of time.
4. Communications variables and secondary service techniques were found to have little relation to percentage favorable vote in the district. In fact, any significant relationship was likely to be negative.

5. The percentage of the registered voters participating in these elections was not significantly correlated with the outcome of the issue.
6. The "closely contested" issues did not differ significantly from the remaining issues. They were quite similar to those that passed or failed by wider margins.
7. Simple research frameworks and methods based on impressionistic descriptive studies and data are not sufficient to analyze and make significant predictive statements about the outcome of school bond elections.

The data analyzed in this report offer little encouragement in predicting outcomes of school bond elections when single variables, commonly used and analyzed in this study, are the basis for prediction. Aggregating these variables and correlating them with affirmative vote does in some cases, produce significant relationships with some categories, but the amount of variation explained is very low. This work provides insights of the type suggested by Merton in the introduction of Sociology Today. Merton suggests that a relatively simple frame of reference should first be used when exploring an area in which sociological theory has not been developed. The authors feel this has been accomplished. Descriptive studies examining variables, traditionally believed to be important in securing school bond passage, apparently do not provide sufficient data to explain this complex community action. Another type of "simplification" was characteristic of this study--simple measures obtained only from superintendents.

The literature survey indicates that this is the most intensive statistical analysis performed with data collected from the districts for this large an N (195). Clearly the lack of trends and significant correlations indicates that there was as much variance within as between districts examined in this analysis.

Hence Merton's exploratory suggestions have been followed without heartening results. However, the degree of confidence has been raised that his kind of community (social system) decision-making is a complex process that requires additional and more precise sociological, social

psychological, and communications theory, methodology and measures to produce significant results. The interaction of variables and the temporal elements of social action apparently must also be taken into account. Such an attempt is planned by the Iowa State University rural sociology research team in the near future.

FOOTNOTES

[2]John Allan Smith, "An Appraisal of School Bond Campaign Techniques." Southern California Education Monographs, No. 15, Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1953.

[3]Richard F. Carter, and William G. Savard, "Influence of Voter Turnout on School Bond and Tax Elections," Cooperative Research Monograph, No. 5, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963.

[4]Clarence N. Stone, "Local Referendums: An Alternative to the Alienated Voter Model," Public Opinion Quarterly (Summer 1965).

[5]Dorothee Brown, "Criteria for Selecting a Citizens Committee," American School Board Journal, 140 (April 1960); Robert R. Denny, "Selling Bonds," American School Board Journal, 139 (November 1959); B. I. MacDonald, Jr., "How to Win Bond Issues and Influence Voters," The School Executive, 74 (April 1955); S. P. Marland, Jr., "Stowage, Mr. Superintendent," The School Executive, 70 (August 1951); E. J. O'Leary, "Garden City Reports Successful Bond and School Millage Elections," American School Board Journal, 148 (March 1964); Joe B. Rushing, "Involving the Community in School Planning," American School Board Journal, 141 (July 1960).

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ralph B. Kimbrough, Political Power and Educational Decision-Making, Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1964; Edgar L. Morphet, et. al., Educational Administration: Concepts, Practices, and Issues, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.; Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959.

[10]John E. Bregman, A Study of the Ultimate Fate of Eighty-Six School Bond Elections in Sixty-Two Selected School Districts During the Period January 1, 1950 to April 1, 1955. Unpublished M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, August, 1955; Lawrence Francis Kasperbauer, School Bond Issues in

Iowa. Unpublished M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 1959; Thomas N. Keating, The Effectiveness of Procedures Used in School Building Programs in Nebraska, Unpublished Ed.D. thesis, University of Nebraska, 1963; Robert N. Overson, A Study of the Ultimate Fate of One Hundred Twenty-One School Bond Elections in Seventy-Eight Selected Iowa School Districts During the Period January 1, 1950, to April 1, 1955. Unpublished M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, August, 1955.

[11] op. cit. Smith.

[12] Robert K. Merton, Leonard Broom and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., (eds.) Sociology Today. Basic Books, Inc. New York. 1959.

[13] Using Merton's suggestions of examining a new area of sociological uncertainty with a relatively simple research design, we attempted to describe the area of sociological concern and to see if a simple research design would prove sufficient. Hence, in many cases the data represent simple "yes-no" or "use or non-use" of specific techniques; however, in some cases the superintendents have placed evaluations on how important they felt a specific technique was in bringing about issue passage.

The basic theoretical orientation of this study is presented in detail in Iowa School Bond Issues Data Book.[14] This orientation follows the simplified social action model of school bond elections. The major general level concepts were shown in Figure 1. Many of the variables (e.g., existing situation) are not capable of being modified by strategists. However, most variables in the bond issue section of the simplified model and those in the election strategy section are capable of being manipulated. The variables examined in the vote stage are manifestations of earlier actions and the post election evaluation occurs following the election and in retrospect. Most emphasis in this article has been placed on the variables in the existing situation and on the methods of communication in the election strategy section of the model. The entire model has been operationalized and analyzed in the basic data book. Spatial limitations do not permit a full discussion in this article.

[14] George M. Beal, Virgil Lagomarcino, John J. Hartman and Judith Murphy, Iowa School Bond Issues Data Book. Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. 1966.

[15]One hundred twenty-seven variables are analyzed for significant differences within a pass-fail dichotomy in Iowa School Bond Issues Data Book. In general, there were few significant differences found in variables when issues that were passed were compared with those that failed.

[16]op. cit. Carter and Savard

[17]op. cit. Beal

[18]George M. Beal, et. al., Leadership and Dynamic Group Action. Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1962, pp. 63-67.

[19]The basic report, Iowa School Bond Issues Data Book presents the total development, measures and operationalized variables relating to the tasks and role responsibilities of the superintendents, the board of education, professional consultants and lay committees in these school bond elections.

[20]John J. Hartman, George M. Beal, and Virgil Lagomarcino, "Getting Out the Vote in School Bond Elections," Journal Paper No. J-5467 of the Iowa Agricultural and Home Economics Experiment Station, Ames, Iowa. Submitted to Educational Administration Quarterly.